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The Breckenridge News.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1903.

# Graustark

Continued From Page 2.

er. The only excuse, uttered in woe-begone tone, was that the prison had not been constructed or manned for such clever scoundrels as Yankees—good name for audacity.

The full story of the daring break for liberty flashed from lip to lip during the day, and it was known all over the water swept city before noon. Baron Dangloss himself had gone to the prisoner's cell early in the morning, mystified by the continued absence of the guard. The door was locked, but from within came groans and cries. Alarmed at once, the captain procured duplicate keys and entered the cell. There he found the helpless, blood-curdling Oghot, bound hand and foot and almost dead from loss of blood. The clothes of the American were on the floor, while his own were missing, gone with the prisoner.

Oghot as soon as he was able related his experience of the night before. It was while making his rounds at midnight that he heard moans from the cell. Animated by a feeling of pity, he opened the slab door and asked if he were ill. The wretched American was lying on the bed, apparently suffering. He said something which the guard could not understand, but which he took to be a plea for assistance. Not suspecting a trick, the kindly guard unlocked the second door and stepped to the bedside only to have the sick man rise suddenly and deal him a treacherous blow over the head with the heavy stool he had secreted behind him. Oghot knew nothing of what followed, so effective was the blow. When he regained consciousness, he was lying on the bed just as the captain had found him. The poor fellow, overwhelmed by the enormity of his mistake, begged Dangloss to shoot him at once. But Dangloss had him conveyed to the hospital ward and tenderly cared for.

Three guards in one of the offices saw a man whom they supposed to be Oghot pass from the prison shortly after 12, and the mortified chief admitted that some one had gone through his private apartment. As the prisoner had taken Oghot's keys, he experienced little difficulty in getting outside the gates. But, vowed Dangloss stormily, he should be recaptured if it required the efforts of all the policemen in Edelweiss. The chagrin of the grim old captain, who had never lost a prisoner, was pitiful to behold.

The forenoon was half over before Harry Anguish heard of his friend's escape. To say that he was paralyzed would be putting it much too mildly. There is no language that can adequately describe his sensations. Forgetting his bodyguard, he tore down the street toward the prison, wild with anxiety and doubt. He met Baron Dangloss, tired and worn, near the gate, but the old officer could tell him nothing except what he had learned from Oghot. Of one thing there could be no doubt—Lorry was gone. Not knowing where to turn or what to do, Anguish raced off to the castle, his bodyguard having located him in the meantime. He was more in need of their protection than ever.

At the castle gates he encountered a party of raving Axphalians, crazed with anger over the flight of the man whose life they had thirsted for so ravenously. Had he been unprotected Anguish would have fared badly at their hands, for they were outspoken in their assertions that he had aided Lorry in the escape. One fiery little fellow cast a glove in the American's face and expected a challenge. Anguish snapped his fingers and sarcastically invited the insulter to meet him next winter in a battle with snowballs, upon which the aggressor blushed in three languages and 300 gestures. Anguish and his men passed inside the gates, which had been barred to the others, and struck out rapidly for the castle doors.

The Princess Yette was sleeping soundly, peacefully, with a smile on her lips, when her prime minister sent an excited attendant to inform her of the prisoner's escape. She sat up in bed, and with her hands clasped about her knees, sleepily announced that she would receive him after her coffee was served. Then she summoned her maids. Her uncle and aunt, the Countess Dagmar (whose merry brown eyes were so full of pretended dismay that the princess could scarcely restrain a smile), and Gaspon, the minister of finance, were awaiting her appearance. She heard the count's story of the escape, marveled at the prisoner's audacity and firmly announced that everything possible should be done to apprehend him. With a perplexed frown on her brow and a dubious twist to her lips, she said:

"I suppose I must offer a reward?" "Certainly!" exclaimed her uncle. "About 500,000 gavvos, uncle?" "Fifty!" cried the two men, aghast. "Isn't that enough?"

"For the murderer of a prince?" demanded Gaspon. "It would be absurd, your highness. He is a most important person."

"Quite so. He is a most important person. I think I'll offer 5,000,000 gavvos."

"More like it. He is worth that, at least," agreed Uncle Caspar.

"Beyond a doubt," sanctioned Gaspon.

"I am glad you do not consider me extravagant," she said demurely. "You may have the placards printed at once," she went on, addressing the treasurer. "Say that a reward of 5,000,000 gavvos will be paid to the person who delivers Grenfall Lorry to me."

"Would it not be better to say 'de-

avers Grenfall Lorry to the tower'?" submitted Gaspon.

"You may say 'to the undersigned' and sign my name," she said reflectively.

"Very well, your highness. They shall be struck off this morning."

"In large type, Gaspon. You must catch him if you can," she added. "He is a very dangerous man, and royalty needs protection." With this wise bit of caution she dismissed the subject and began to talk of the storm.

As the two young plotters were hastening up the stairs later on an attendant approached and informed the princess that Mr. Anguish requested an audience.

"Conduct him to my boudoir," she said, her eyes sparkling with triumph. In the seclusion of the boudoir she and the countess laughed like children over the reward that had been so solemnly ordered.

"Five thousand gavvos!" cried Dagmar, leaning back in her chair to emphasize the delight she felt. "What a joke!"

Tap, tap, came a knock on the door, and in the same instant it flew open, for Mr. Anguish was in a hurry. As he plunged into their presence a pair of heels found the floor spasmodically.

"Oh, I beg pardon!" he gasped as if about to fly. "May I come in?"

"Not unless you go outside. You are already in, it seems," said the princess, advancing to meet him. The countess was very still and sedate. "I am so glad you have come."

"Heard about Lorry? The fool is out and gone!" he cried, unable to restrain himself. Without a word she dragged him to the divan, and, between them, he soon had the whole story poured into his ears, the princess on one side, the countess on the other.

"You are a wonder!" he exclaimed when all the facts were known to him. He executed a little dance of approval, entirely out of place in the boudoir of a princess, but very much in touch with prevailing sentiment. "But what's to become of me?" he asked after cooling down. "I have no excuse for remaining in Graustark, and I don't like to leave him here either."

"Oh, I have made plans for you," said she. "You are to be held as hostage."

"What?"

"I thought of your predicament last night, and here is the solution: This very day I shall issue an order forbidding you the right to leave Edelweiss. You will not be in prison, but your every movement is to be watched. A strong guard will have you under surveillance, and any attempt to escape or to communicate with your friend will result in your confinement and his detection. In this way you may stay here until the time comes to fly. The Axphalian people must be satisfied, you know. Your freedom will not be disturbed. You may come and go as you like, but you are ostensibly a prisoner. By detaining you forcibly we gain a point, for you are needed here. There is no other way in which you can explain a continued presence in Graustark. Is not my plan a good one?"

"It is beyond comparison," he said, rising and bowing low. "So shrewd is this plan that you make me a hostage forever. I shall not escape its memory if I live to be a thousand."

At parting she said seriously: "A great deal depends on your discretion, Mr. Anguish. My guards will watch your every action, for they are not in the secret—excepting Quinox—and any attempt on your part to communicate with Grenfall Lorry will be fatal."

"Trust me, your highness. I have had much instruction in wisdom today."

"I hope we shall see you often," she said.

"Daily—as a hostage," he replied, glancing toward the countess.

"That means until the other man is captured," said the young lady saucily. As he left the castle he gazed at the distant building in the sky and wondered how it had ever been approached in a carriage. She had not told him that Alide drove for miles over winding roads that led to the monastery up a gentler slope from the rear.

The next afternoon Edelweiss thrilled with a new excitement. Prince Bolaro of Axphalia, mad with grief and rage, came thundering into the city with his court at his heels. His wrath had been increased until it resembled a tornado when he read the reward placard in the uplands. Not until then did he know that the murderer had escaped and that vengeance might be denied him.

After viewing the body of Lorenz as it lay in the sarcophagus of the royal palace, where it had been borne at the command of the Princess Yette, he demanded audience with his son's betrothed, and it was with fear that she prepared for the trying ordeal, an interview with the grief-crazed old man. The castle was in a furore. Its halls soon thronged with diplomatists and there was an ugly sense of trouble in the air, suggestive of the explosion which follows the igniting of a powder magazine.

The slim, pale faced princess met the burly old ruler in the grand council chamber. He and his nobles had been kept waiting but a short time. Within a very few minutes after they had been conducted to the chamber by Count Halfont and other dignitaries the fair ruler came into the room and advanced between the bowing lines of courtiers to the spot where sat the man who held Graustark in his grasp.

Bolaro arose as she drew near, his gaunt face black and unfriendly. She extended her hand gracefully, and he a prince for all his wrath, touched his trembling lips to its white, smooth back.

"I come in grief and sadness to you court, most glorious Yette. My burden of sorrow is greater than I can bear," he said hoarsely.

"Would that I could give you relief,"

lation," she said, sitting in the reserved for her use at council gatherings. "Alas, it grieves me that I can offer nothing more than words." Truly she pitied him in his bereavement.

Bolaro said that he had heard of the murderer's escape and asked what effort was being made to recapture him. Yette related all that had happened, expressing humiliation over the fact that her officers had been unable to accomplish anything, adding that she did not believe the fugitive could get away from Graustark safely with out her knowledge. The old prince was working himself back into the violent rage that had been temporarily subdued, and at last broke out in a vicious denunciation of the carelessness that had allowed the man to escape. He first insisted that Dangloss and his incompetent assistants be thrown into prison for life or executed for criminal negligence; then he demanded the life of Harry Anguish as an aider and abettor in the flight of the murderer. In both cases the princess firmly refused to take the action demanded. Then she acquainted him with her intention to detain Anguish as hostage and to have his every action watched in the hope that a clew to the whereabouts of the fugitive might be discovered, providing, of course, that the friend knew anything at all about the matter. The Duke of Mizrox and others loudly joined in the cry for Anguish's arrest, but she bravely held out against them and in the end curtly informed them that the American, whom she believed to be innocent of all complicity in the escape, should be subjected to no indignity other than detention in the city under guard, as she had ordered.

"I insist that this man be cast into prison at once," snarled the white-lipped Bolaro.

"You are not at liberty to command in Graustark, Prince Bolaro," she said slowly and distinctly. "I am ruler here."

Bolaro gasped and was speechless for some seconds.

"You shall not be ruler long, madam," he said malevolently, significantly.

"But I am ruler now, and, as such, I ask your highness to withdraw from my castle. I did not know that I was to submit to these threats and insults or I should not have been kind enough to grant you an audience, prince though you are. When I came to this room, it was to give you my deepest sympathy and to receive yours, not to be insulted. You have lost a son, I my betrothed. It will become you, Prince Bolaro, to vent your vindictiveness upon me. My men are doing all in their power to capture the man who has so unfortunately escaped from our clutches, and I shall not allow you or any one else to dictate the manner in which we are to proceed." She uttered these words cuttingly and at their conclusion arose to leave the room.

Bolaro heard her through in surprise and with conflicting emotions. There was no mistaking her indignation, so he deemed it policy to bottle his wrath, overlook the most offensive rebuke his vanity had ever received and submit to what was evidently a just decision.

"Stay, your highness. I submit to your proposition regarding the other stranger, although I doubt its wisdom. There is but one in whom I am really interested—the one who killed my son. There is to be no cessation in the effort to find him, I am to understand. I now have a proposition. With me are 300 of my bravest soldiers. I offer them to you in order that you may better prosecute the search. They will remain here, and you may use them in any way you see fit. The Duke of Mizrox will linger in Edelweiss, and with him you and yours may always confer. He also is at your command. This man must be retaken. I swear by all that is above and below me he shall be found if I hunt the world over to accomplish that end. He shall not escape my vengeance!"

"And hark you to this: On the 20th of next month I shall demand payment of the debt due Axphalia. So deeply is my heart set on the death of this Grenfall Lorry that I agree now, before all these friends of ours, that if he be captured and executed in my presence before the 20th of November Graustark shall be granted the extension of time that would have obtained in the event that your espousal with the man he killed. You hear this offer, all? It is bound by my sacred word of honor. His death before the 20th gives Graustark ten years of grace. If he is still at large, I shall claim my own. This offer, I believe, most gracious Yette, will greatly encourage your people in the effort to capture the man we seek."

The princess heard the remarkable proposition with face deathly pale, heart severely beating. Again was the duty to Graustark thrust cruelly upon her. She could save the one only by sacrificing the other.

"We will do all in our power to—to prove ourselves grateful for your magnanimous offer," she said. As she passed from the room, followed by her uncle, she heard the increasing buzz of excitement on all sides, the unrestrained expressions of amazement and relief from her own subjects, the patronizing comments of the visitors—all conspiring to sound her doom. Which way was she to turn in order to escape from herself?

"We must catch this man, Yette," said Halfont on the stairway. "There is no alternative."

"Except our inability to do so," she murmured. In that moment she determined that Grenfall Lorry should never be taken if she could prevent it. He was innocent, and it was Graustark's penalty to pay.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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